IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 6, 12, and 16. **Please also amend** claims 3-5, 9-11, 13, 15, and 17-19, as shown in the complete list of claims that is presented below.

Claims 1 and 2 (canceled).

3. (currently amended) A packet receiver connected to a network for receiving communication packets sent from a packet transmitter and containing coded speech data via said network, decoding said communication packets, and outputting decoded speech data, said packet receiver comprising:

a packet memory circuit for temporarily storing received packets including the communication packets in a first-in first-out fashion to thereby form a queue;

a read start threshold setting circuit for setting, with respect to a length of the queue, a read start threshold at which the received packets should begin to be read out <u>for decoding the received packets and outputting decoded speech data</u>;

a read comparing circuit for determining whether or not the length of the queue has reached said read start threshold, and outputting a read command signal in accordance with a result of a decision; [[and]]

a read control circuit for causing, in response to said read command signal, the received packets to be read out of said packet memory circuit, wherein by using a standard deviation <u>of said coded speech data</u> that reflects a jitter distribution of the network and causes a receipt time of the communication packet to vary, said read start point setting circuit sets

the read start threshold at a length of the queue that is three times to four times as great as

said standard ~~deviation.~~ deviation; and

a diminishment control circuit for setting, with respect to the length of the queue, a

discard start threshold and a discard end threshold at which the received packets should begin

to be discarded and should stop being discarded, respectively, designating, when the length of

said queue exceeds said discard start threshold, a received packet to be read out as a

candidate to be discarded, and discarding said packet designated as a candidate,

wherein said discard end threshold is set to a value between said discard start

threshold and said read start threshold, and different than either of said discard start threshold

and said read start threshold, if said discard start threshold is greater than said read start

threshold.

4. (currently amended) A packet receiver connected to a network for receiving

communication packets sent from a packet transmitter and containing coded speech data via

said network, decoding said communication packets, and outputting decoded speech data,

said packet receiver comprising:

a packet memory circuit for temporarily storing received packets including the

communication packets in a first-in first-out fashion to thereby form a queue;

a read start threshold setting circuit for setting, with respect to a length of the queue, a

read start threshold at which the received packets should begin to be read out for decoding

the received packets and outputting decoded speech data;

a read comparing circuit for determining whether or not the length of the queue has

reached said read start threshold, and outputting a read command signal in accordance with a

result of a decision;

a read control circuit for causing, in response to said read command signal, the received packets to be read out of said packet memory circuit, by using a standard deviation of said coded speech data that reflects a jitter distribution of the network and causes a receipt time of the communication packet to vary, said read start point setting circuit setting the read start threshold at a length of the queue that is three to four times as great as said standard deviation:, and

a diminishment control circuit for setting, with respect to the length of the queue, a discard start threshold and a discard end threshold at which the received packets should begin to be discarded and should ~~end to be~~ stop being discarded, respectively, designating, when the length of said queue exceeds said discard start threshold, a received packet to be read out as a candidate to be discarded, estimating, based on sound/soundless information contained in said packet designated, ~~and the queue and/or~~ an influence of said packet on quality of sound to be reproduced in an auditory aspect, and discarding or decoding said packet in accordance with a result of an ~~estimation.~~ estimation,

wherein said discard end threshold is set to a value between said discard start threshold and said read start threshold, and different than either of said discard start threshold and said read start threshold, if said discard start threshold is greater than said read start threshold.

5. (currently amended) A packet receiver in accordance with claim 4, wherein said diminishment control circuit comprises:

a switching decision circuit for generating, when the length of the queue exceeds said

discard start threshold, a signal to said read control circuit for reading the packet designated out of said packet memory circuit as the candidate, estimating the influence of said packet on sound quality, and generating a switching signal for selecting either one of discard processing and decode processing;

a switch for selecting the discard processing or the decode processing in accordance with said switching signal; and

a discarding circuit for executing the discard processing to thereby discard the received packet input via said ~~switch;~~ switch,

~~wherein~~ said switching decision circuit ~~causing~~ causes said switch to continuously select the discard processing up to said discharge end threshold set on the queue.

Claims 6-8 (cancelled).

9. (currently amended) A packet receiver connected to a network for receiving communication packets sent from a packet transmitter and containing coded speech data via said network, decoding said communication packets, and outputting decoded speech data, said packet receiver comprising:

a packet memory circuit for temporarily storing received packets including the communication packets in a first-in first-out fashion to thereby form a queue;

a read start threshold setting circuit for setting, with respect to a length of the queue, a read start threshold at which the received packets should begin to be read out for decoding the received packets and outputting decoded speech data;

a read comparing circuit for determining whether or not the length of the queue has

reached said read start threshold, and outputting a read command signal in accordance with a result of a decision; [[and]]

a read control circuit for causing, in response to said read command signal, the received packets to be read out of said packet memory circuit, and a dummy memory circuit storing a dummy packet containing exclusive speech [[data,]] data; and

a diminishment control circuit for setting, with respect to the length of the queue, a discard start threshold and a discard end threshold at which the received packets should begin to be discarded and should stop being discarded, respectively, designating, when the length of said queue exceeds said discard start threshold, a received packet to be read out as a candidate to be discarded, and discarding said packet designated as a candidate,

wherein before a new receipt of the communication packets, said dummy memory circuit feeds said dummy packet to said packet memory circuit,

wherein by using a standard deviation of said coded speech data that reflects a jitter distribution of the network and causes a receipt time of the communication packet to vary, said read start threshold setting circuit sets the read start threshold at a length of the queue that is three times to four times grater as great as said standard deviation. deviation, and

wherein said discard end threshold is set to a value between said discard start threshold and said read start threshold, and different than either of said discard start threshold and said read start threshold, if said discard start threshold is greater than said read start threshold.

10. (currently amended) A packet receiver in accordance with 9, further comprising [[a]] wherein said diminishment control circuit for setting, with respect to the length of the

queue, a discard start threshold and a discard end threshold at which the received packets should begin to be discarded and should end to be discarded, respectively, designating, when the length of said queue exceeds said discard start threshold, a received packet to be read out as a candidate to be discarded, estimating, serves to estimate, based on sound/soundless information contained in said packet designated, and the queue, an influence of said packet on sound quality of sound to be reproduced in an auditory aspect, and discarding or decoding said packet in accordance with a result of an estimation.

11. (currently amended) A packet receiver in accordance with claim 10, wherein said diminishment control circuit comprises:

a switching decision circuit for generating, when the length of the queue exceeds said discard start threshold, a signal to said read control circuit for reading the packet designated out of said packet memory circuit as the candidate, estimating the influence of said packet on sound quality, and generating a switching signal for selecting either one of discard processing and decode processing;

a switch for selecting the discard processing or the decode processing in accordance with said switching signal; and

a discarding circuit for executing the discard processing to thereby discard the received packet input via said switch; switch,

wherein said switching decision circuit causing causes said switch to continuously select the discard processing up to said discharge end threshold set on the queue.

Claim 12. (cancelled)

13. (currently amended) A packet receiver in accordance with claim [[12]] 11, further comprising a packet monitoring circuit for monitoring communication packets being sequentially received via the network and discarding, when any one of said communication packets exceeds a preselected allowable delay and/or is received in an inverse sequence, the one packet and/or feeding a preselected error packet to said packet memory circuit.

14. (original) A packet receiver in accordance with claim 13, wherein said packet monitoring circuit comprises:

a time-out monitoring circuit for setting a particular receipt limit time representative of the preselected allowable delay to each communication packet, and determining whether or not each communication packet arrives before said receipt limit time assigned thereto expires;

a sequence monitoring circuit for monitoring a sequence of receipt of the communication packets on the basis of information contained in said communication packets;

a discarding circuit for monitoring the communication packets and discarding any one of said communication packets that has arrived after the receipt limit time assigned to thereto; and

an error compensating circuit for feeding, when any one of the communication packets is discarded or received in an inverse sequence, the error packet to said packet memory circuit.

15. (currently amended) A method of receiving communication packets sent from a packet transmitter via a communication network and containing coded speech data via said network, decoding said communication packets, and outputting decoded speech data, said method comprising:

a first step of setting, before temporarily storing received packets including the communication packets to thereby form a queue, a read start threshold at which said received packets should begin to be read out for decoding the received packets and outputting decoded speech data, a discard start threshold at which said received packets should begin to be discarded, and a discard end threshold at which said received packets should end to be discarded with respect to a length of said queue, by using a standard deviation of said coded speech data that reflects a jitter distribution of the network and causes a receipt time of the communication packet to vary, the read start threshold being set at a length of the queue that is three to four times as great as said standard deviation;

a second step of temporarily storing the received packets to thereby form the queue;

a third step of comparing the queue with said read start threshold and outputting, in accordance with a result of a comparison, a read command signal for reading out the received packets;

a fourth step of reading out the received packets in response to said read command signal and either one of a read request signal requesting the received packets to be decoded and a discard candidate read command signal output when the queue reaches said discard start threshold;

a fifth step of selecting either one of discarding and decoding of the received packets read out;

a sixth step of discarding, when the discarding is selected, at least one of the received packets from a head of the queue while determining whether or not the length of the queue has reached said discard end threshold; and

a seventh step of decoding, when the decoding is selected, the received packet read [[out.]] out,

wherein said discard end threshold is set to a value between said discard start threshold and said read start threshold, and different than either of said discard start threshold and said read start threshold, if said discard start threshold is greater than said read start threshold.

Claim 16 (cancelled).

17. (currently amended) A method in accordance with claim 15, wherein said fifth step comprises designating, in response to said candidate read command signal, the received packet read out as a candidate to be discarded, and estimating, based on sound/soundless information contained in said packet designated, and the queue and/or an influence of said packet on sound quality of sound to be reproduced in an auditory aspect, and discarding or decoding said packet in accordance with a result of an estimation.

18. (currently amended) A method in accordance with claim 15, wherein before [[a]] [[new]] receipt of [[the]] a new communication packet, a dummy packet containing exclusive speech data is fed and stored.

19. (currently amended) A method in accordance with claim 15, further comprising an eighth step of, ~~discarding,~~ when any one of communication packets sequentially received via the network and monitored exceeds a preselected allowable delay ~~and/or~~ <u>or</u> is received in an inverse sequence, <u>at least one of discarding</u> the one communication packet ~~and/or~~ <u>and</u> feeding a preselected error packet.

20. (original) A method in accordance with claim 19, wherein said eighth step comprises:

a step of assigning a particular receipt limit time representative of the preselected allowable delay to each communication packet, and determining whether or not each communication packet arrives before said receipt limit time assigned thereto expires;

a step of monitoring a sequence of receipt of the communication packets on the basis of information contained in said communication packets;

a step of monitoring the communication packets and discarding any one of said communication packets that has arrived after the receipt limit time assigned to thereto; and

a step of feeding, when any one of the communication packets is discarded or received in an inverse sequence, the error packet.